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Pettis Co., Teacher's Institute

EDUCATIONAL INTERESTS DISCUSSED.

THE PRESENT QUESTION.

By I. L.Lowe, Pres., George R. Smith College,

Child Culture,

The child learns by observation, conference, and experence; viz: he sees, talks about what he sees, and lastly he performs, experiments or executes.

Wise is the teacher who can safely lead him through this labyrinth of difficulties-lovingly, patiently, surely-as a father would lead his son through a thronged thoroughfare.

As teachers, we sometimes grow impatient and, too often, we forget that we were once children—buoyant with the energies and proclivities innate to childhood.

It is not enough that the teacher loves her profession far more than her salary; and that she possess her soul with patience, but in addition to these pedagogic virtues she must be deeply imbued with a broad sympathy for children.

Other things being equal, that teacher succeeds best whose pupils love her most.

On the part of the teacher, honesty, impartiality, respect, confidence, and sympathy are powerful agencies for generating love, which is reciprocative rather than spasmdoic.

The object of education is to make good, intelligent, progressive, industrious, patriotic citizens.

To educate a child for the sole purpose of giving him power for money-getting is a travesty on the profession. The principle, "I had rather be right than president" has much educative value.

There is such a thing in the science of pedagogy as the correlation of mental energy; viz: all kinds of mental activity are so related to one another that mental activity of any kind can be transformed into mental activity of any other kind.

Two-thirds of what we teach the child in school he will forget, and in life's school he will never have need for it. But the mental power, or energy, acquired as the result of mental activity put forth in mathematics, classics, literature, and the sciences is a reserve power always present and ever at his disposal to aid in the solution and translation of life's problems.

The child too often is a creature of chance, but always a product of environment and opportunity.

It is the duty of the state, of parents and teachers to place about him such influences as will enlarge his capacity for usefullness in the humble as well as higher and more lcrative walks of life.

Not for school but for life we teach; and, in the school of life it is our imperative duty to prepare young America for life's school where he who is weak or ill prepared must fail, where responsibilities are uncompromising and where mans mind or character, is measured by the constituent elements of the soul.

Prof. Shelton French.

Importance Of Child's Study.

Through the light of my short experience with children I find there is nothing more intricate than watching the development and growth of the child. Children live in a sphere entirely different from others, they are in closer touch with the Creator, and their little thoughts are pure and it is at this stage with children they should receive the closest attention and the very best instruction possible.

Let a child be ever so buoyant, if he is neglected in his youth, his mind is blighted forever, and never again will the child be so promising. The noblest and most efficient work should be done among the little ones, and to these workers are due the most lavish and unstinted praise. Save the children, get their minds to thinking in the right channels, for the girls and boys of to-day are the men and women of to-morrow.

Our only redemption will be in the cultivation of our youth and if this be neglected, there will be no problem to solve. Instill within these little minds an idea that will follow them thru life, not only follow them but actuate them to higher and nobler ideals. Again I repeat Save the children.

The warp and woof of children is like the cultivation of a tender plant. We admit that if thru ignorance or negligence the planter places a tender plant in an unfavorable soil and fails to give it the proper nourishment, we would not and could not expect to reap a bountiful harvest; but rather a moderate crop.

Again suppose this to be a most thrifty planter whose delight is in producing the finest quality of its kind. He will supply the plant with every possible nourishment that pertains the growth and develment of the plant, hence he may boast of both quality and quantity.

So it is with children. If surrounded by the most adverse circumstances, all the sunlight of past ages cannot cave them. The child may seem to foster and prosper for a while, but this is only momentary, for the bad atmosphere it has breathed is instilled into its little soul, and by and by will predominate. So often we hear it remarked, "O, what a pity, that little——ruined little——" Yet at the same time this has been in little——for a time and ——has been skilled enough to conceal it, hence, some other child must bear the blame.

Again, give a child pure and wholesome atmosphere with good surroundings and the prospects are bright for it to mature into a good man or woman. So the greatest responsibility lies in the cultivation of the youth—

Cherish then the gifts of childhood,
Use them gently, guard them well;
For their future growth and greatness,
Who can measure, who can tell?

—Miss Arden Abbott, Humanville, Mo.

Theory And Practice.

Evolution is the guide to improvement in educational work Instead of trying by experiment what methods may be successful, we should study to know the laws which determine what must be successful, and test all processes by principles.

The method of one science becomes the method of all Thinking is not one thing in Botany, another in Mathematics and another in Literature. Advance is always from the vague and indefinite whole to the fuller and more definite one.

Parts are not to be examined until the whole has been surveyed.

The evolution of the art of expression suggests the principle that expression should be acquired by unconscious imitation. The child is born into a world of thought and expression presented together as wholes. To preserve them as whole in the school-room, the learner should be surrounded by the means of free expression, that the attitude of his mind may become creative.

The increasing desire of teachers to bring practice into harmony with law is a hopeful sign. All over the country there are teachers, studious sincere, self-sacrificing, standing undismayed in the midst of ignorance and selfishness, and this being so, tho progress is not always in a straight line, the resurrection is every day going on.

—Estelle Martin, Lincoln school.

Opportunity.

Every life is full of them. Every lesson in school or college is an opportunity. Every examination is a chance in life. The lack of opportunity is ever the excuse for a weak vascillating mind.

Young men and women, why stand ye here all the day idle? Was the land all occupied before you were born? Has the earth ceased to yield its increase? Are the seats all taken; the positions all filled? Are the resources of your country fully developed? Are the secrets of nature all mastered? Is there no way in which you can utilize these passing moments to improve yourself or benefit others?

Wherein all the experience of the past is garnered for your inspiration, do not wait for opportunity. Make it. The trouble with us is that we are ever looking for a princely chance of acquiring fame or worth. We are expecting mastery without apprenticeship, knowledge without study, and riches by credit. Any opportunity will only make you ridiculous unless you are prepared for it.

—Lilian J. Martin, Smithton, Mo.

Discipline.

One of the sbrest needs of the teacher in our schools, is that he should have good discipline. It is difficult indeed, to persuade pupils to observe good order and proper decorum in school, and on the play ground, when there are so many who seem to hold good behavior in absolute contempt Teachers have tried every method to bring their pupils into possession of a noble character and to have higher ideals in life, and to a very great extent many have been successful.

Good discipline is one of the stepping stones to a higher education. If the parents would aid in inculcating the most useful lesson to be learned by their children-obedience and a faithful performance of all duties assigned them at home —what a world of care would be lifted from the minds of teachers. Let the parents and teachers be co-workers for the uplifting of our boys and girls.

Mrs. Anna D Smith, Windsor, Mo.

Ambition,

Ambition is one of the most important elements to success. There is nothing more essential to a person's development especially if he is of the Negro race. We do not mean ambition, however, that will oppress and crush our fellow-men, but that to lift them as we ourselves rise. Nearly every person has some aim or ambition in life, but this should be from a true and noble standpoint. Ambition, that is, the desire to do some great thing and to be of some account in the world, is commendable if prompted by an unselfish motive and controlled by a right-spirit. Henry Morley, when a young man had a great literary ambition and thought he could make a name for himself among the minor poets of the day, One day he asked himself the question whether it would be of more service to his country people to try to bring others to love the great poets of England than to be himself one of the small ones. He deliberated, cast aside his small ambition and adapted the greater one and became a famous teacher of literature. Such noble ambition seldom fails of realization Selfish ambition seldom succeeds. With ambition, backed by motives of purity, we can make it. Make it, as Lincoln made his in the log cabin in the wilderness. Make it, as Henry Wilson made his during his evenings on the farm, when he read a thousand volumes, while other boys of the neighborhood wasted their evenings. Make it, as George Stephenson made his, when he mastered the rules of mathematics, with a bit of chalk on the sides of the coal wagons in the mines. Make it, as Douglas made his when he learned to read from scraps of paper and posters. Make it, as every man must who would accomplish any thing worth the effort. Labor faithfully, labor diligently, labor assiduously. We should do all in our power to bring our lives to the topmost round of the ladder, ever mindful of the lines;—

"Lives of great men all remind us,
We can make our lives sublime,
And departing leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time.
Footprints that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main.
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again."

Miss M. Minniolia Jackson. Lincoln School.

News paper an Educative Medium,

He who pores upon books alone, must be found in the confines of retrospection This incessant looking backward is wholly incompatible with systematic ideas of progress. The riches of science, or systematized knowledge more than repay the most ardent research and study; but, he who stops here must soon find serious lack confronting him. The periodicals can supply this lack.

The home with a good newspaper possesses an educative element whose reviewing and forecasting propensities perform the dual function of bringing the results and prospects of ages into transparent relations.

The home and office can ill afford to do without a good newspaper. It begets a species of general inquisitiveness and acquisition that continually lead individuals, families, and communities from the known to the unknown. And even the children almost instinctively look forward to periods of issuance because their minds instinctively seek the new and knowable

There are not too many newspapers edited by colored men; but there are too few readers of these journals.

The quality of many of our colored newspapers might be improved This naturally follows a proper, manifest appreciation of journalism. Give your moral and financial support and success is assured. —Prof. A. W. Freeman, Clinton, Mo.

The Present Question,

Questions change. The old question is answered or answers itself or is found to be not worth answering. Once it was can the Negro learn anything? The slave owner said no! and then made it a crime for anyone to teach him. The question disappeared as soon as an opportunity for an education offered.

After the "can?" came the "ought?" Were it not better since it is the lot of the people to be the laborers, "hewers of wood and drawers of water," that they should be kept in ignorance. For said some; "If they learn to say hic, hac, huc they forget to say gee, haw, Buck." That question too has answered itself. There are few even of the Southern peple who would deny the right of education. The present discussion hinges on the word what. What kind of an education is called for at the present day?

This question can be much simplified if we can first answer one still more fundamental, why? Why should anyone be educated? The obvious answer is because he is a person. It is no longer a question of race or class or condition. The old catechism question, "What is the chief end of man?," was answered. "To glorify God and enjoy Him forever." There is no right view of education without the recognition of the fact that man has a spiritual nature and needs to be taught his right relation to God, a social nature with relations to his fellow men in the family society and state, and lastly a physical nature with wants that must be supplied from the material world.

As to the first need there is no distinction to be made. The individual soul in its relation to its Maker is the same for all people in every age and in all circumstances. The Great Teacher declared that "to know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom he had sent" to be the true and real life. To have the essentials of religion is an essential part of education, because man is essentially religious. This poin needs to be emphasized, because, while generally granted, it is also generally overlooked or neglected. Leave out religion which is likewise the basis of morality and other education is as a house built on the sand. In his farewell address Washington warned the nation that there could be no morals without religion, Governeur Morris testified the same effect and Daniel Webster declared that in no age or clime had morals been taught without the sanctions of religion. From the same standpoint, because we are rational beings, it is unworthy of any one to remain in ignorance. What we may gain in schools is a matter of more or less. No one can learn it all, but each one should have enough education to fairly grasp the great questions of nature and life, and, at least, a taste for knowledge, and the ability to read and study for one's self.

In the social sphere every boy and girl as they approach adult life should be taught the sacredness of parentage and the duties of the home life, There is no more crying lack than of properly educated fathers and mothers. If parents can not and will not teach their children what they should know, and if it is not in the province of the pulpit or public press, then the duty devolves on the teacher in the school, who should put into the hands of the youth such books as What a Boy Ought to Know, and What a Girl Ought to Know.

Only a little less important is a knowledge of what is fitting in society. To some extent the law of good breeding is the same, the world around. Genuine politeness is the same in prince or peasant. It ought to be a part of a "polite" education at least to teach the fundamentals of politeness. The conventionalities are a matter of usage, and depend upon the particular circle in which one may move. For most of us there is no need of court etiquette, but the usages of good society should be taught to all. If one is not already admitted into the best society I use the words good and best advisedly-true politeness is the open sesame to it.

The principle is somewhat the same touching our relations to the government. Every citizen should be educated in reference to the laws of the land in which he lives. Evidently the education of a citizen in Russia or Turkey should differ in this respect from that of one in England or the United States. What we count a proper political education would be in the former countries useless on the part of the people, and on the part of the government dangerous. In a country like ours where every subject is likewise a sovereign, the citizen should be educated accordingly. This is true even for those whose rights as citizens may be denied them and who may not find it expedient to insist upon their rights. This is of course in conflict with the politics of South Carolina and Mississippi. Nevertheless the government must for its own safety secure an intelligent citizenship. How much this includes may be an open question. All will admit however that there should at least be a fair understanding of our principles and methods of government, some knowledge of current public discussions, and a loyalty to our free institutions.

The final point is that relating to our physical life, what is usually called a practical education, or that fits one "to make a living." What kind of an education is best adapted for gaining a livelihood? It goes without saying that a common English education is necessary. Without ability to read and write and cast accounts one would be entirely at the mercy of others. Perhaps joined with good sense, this would be enough for mere menial employments. But to rise at all in the scale of labor, more is needed. It is now becoming an accepted fact that a liberal education is almost essential to success in business life. Statistics show that a common school education increases the chances of success fourfold over an uneducated child, that a high school training will increase the chances of the common school boy twenty-three times, and that a college course increases the chances of a high school boy nine times, giving him 219 times the chance of the common school boy and more than 800 times the chance of the untrained. The particular form which this training should take depends largely on circumstances. There will never cease to be a call in what are known as the learned professions, and for these a classical or liberal culture is desirable. In some quarters there is a tendency to discourage young people of the Negro race from entering the professions, on the ground that there is not room for them. It does not yet appear that there are too many well educated ministers, physicans and teachers. As Dr. McDowell has pointed out, if all the students who attend our institutions for higher education were to enter professional life, there would be none too many.

But the mass of the people cannot secure a college culture. That is not necessary. Most of the world's work is to be done with mens hands. By "the sweat of his own brow," rather than by the sweat of his mouth" he is to gain his bread. All the more reason why hand and brow should be trained in unison.

Since the system of apprenticeship is out of vogue and trades unionism limits its membership, about the only way left to learn a trade is in a Manual Training school. This should be provided for in our public school system. As it is not it must be done by private munificence, and naturally in connection with our Church Schools.

In discussing this present day question of education, I have endeavored to indicate that it is not a question of race, but primarily of personality and then of circumstances. The matter of Manual Training deserves much fuller treatment but time and space forbid.

Lines of Idleness.

By Miss Jean Cecil Taylor SEDALIA, MO]

Of all the want and suffering,
That the cold, cold, world can know,
Starving, yearning, and surging,
The thousands come and go; yet
They heed not the sorrows of others
But seem intent on their joy or woe.
Nor they care not who fate covers,
If they are permitted to go.

Of all a lifetime longing,
One's soul can ever know,
Is the burning, gloating feeling
Of the heart, when breaking with woe
Or, when thirsting for sweet revenge
That is gnawing and biting so slow
That we can all but feel the fire
And see its ruddy glow.

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